

RIVIER UNIVERSITY HOSTS CONFERENCE “SILENT SCREAMS: CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT & EXPLOITATION” (APRIL 11, 2014)

Eric A. Gentes, Esq.*

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“The sexual abuse and exploitation of children is one of the most vicious crimes conceivable, a violation of mankind’s most basic duty to protect the innocent.” — **James T. Walsh**

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face... The danger lies in refusing to face the fear, in not daring to come to grips with it... You must make yourself succeed every time. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.” — **Eleanor Roosevelt**

On Friday April 11, 2014, Rivier University hosted a half-day conference, entitled “Silent Screams: Child Sexual Assault & Exploitation”. The conference program (below) includes a list of speakers and descriptions of their presentations.

Attendance at the conference was approximately 200 people. They included:

- Students from Rivier University (92) and Southern New Hampshire University (51), as well students from Manchester and Nashua Community colleges;
- Law enforcement officers from a number of Police Departments, including Nashua PD;
- Probation and Parole officers;
- Juvenile Probation and Parole officers;
- Personnel from the New Hampshire Division of Youth and Families;
- Local teachers;
- Two Judge Advocate General (JAG) officers from Hanscom Air Force Base in Mass.

The conference was the second one that I, along with my colleague Dr. Rafael Rojas, Jr., Associate Professor of the Justice Studies Department at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). The first conference was in April 2013, at SNHU, and entitled “Cybercrime: It’s Running Deep and Silent, Beware”.

The official sponsors of both conferences were:

- The New Hampshire Association of Criminal Justice Educators (NHACJE);
- Southern New Hampshire University Justice Studies Association (JSA); and
- Rivier University Criminal Justice Program.

Dr. Rafael Rojas, Jr. is the president and I am the vice president of the NHACJE.

The New Hampshire Association of Criminal Justice Educators (NHACJE),
Southern New Hampshire University Justice Studies Association (JSA),
and Rivier University Criminal Justice Program**

present

SILENT SCREAMS: CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT & EXPLOITATION

Location:

Sylvia Trotter Hall, Room 235
Rivier University
420 South Main St.
Nashua, NH 03060

Time: 8:00AM – 2:00PM

Date: April 11, 2014

Panel 1

8:00-9:15AM

Introduction: Child Sexual Assault & Exploitation

Presenter: Kevin O’Shea, University of New Hampshire

9:15 -9:30AM

Coffee Break

Panel 2

9:30-10:45AM

Turning Child Sexual Predators’ Tools Against Them

Presenter: Detective Lieutenant James F. McLaughlin, Keene NH Police Department

10:45-11:00AM

Coffee Break

Panel 3

11:00-12:15PM

Prosecuting Child Sexual Predators

Presenters: Patricia M. LaFrance, Esq., Hillsborough, NH County Attorney and
Thomas P. Velardi, Esq., Strafford, NH County Attorney

12:15-12:30PM

Coffee Break

Panel 4

12:30-1:45PM

Surviving Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation

Presenters: Antoinette Harrington, Psy.D. and Jessica Bergeron, Executive Director at
a senior living community in Massachusetts.

For more information:

Eric. A. Gentes, Esq., Criminal Justice Program Director and NHACJE Vice-President, Rivier University,
Nashua, NH 03060. Tel: (603) 897-8266, E-mail: egentes@rivier.edu.

Dr. Rafael Rojas, Jr. Justice Studies Department and NHACJE President, Southern NH University,
Manchester, NH 03106. Tel: 603-629-4621, e-mail: r.rojas@snhu.edu.

** NHACJE, the State affiliate of the Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences (NEACJS) and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS), serves academics, students and practitioners in criminal justice and related fields in an effort to enhance the quality and the dissemination of criminal justice scholarship. Anyone wishing to join NEACJE, please contact Dr. Rafael Rojas, Jr. or Professor Eric Gentes, as indicated above.

PARTICIPANTS’ BIOGRAPHIES & PRESENTATIONS

Panel 1 - Introduction: Child Sexual Assault & Exploitation – 8:00 – 9:15AM

Mr. Kevin O’Shea

Brief Biography: Kevin O’Shea lectures at the University of New Hampshire on Technology and Crime and is a part-time Training Specialist with the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council. He is the project director for the Technical Analysis Group in Justiceworks, which, “is a research and development group in justice studies at the University of New Hampshire. Founded [] as a collaborative consortium of academicians and professionals, Justiceworks offers an array of balanced, non-partisan services addressing issues in crime, safety, security, and the administration of justice.” See <http://cola.unh.edu/justiceworks/about>. At Justiceworks, Kevin supports the implementation of the New Hampshire Strategic Plan to Combat Cyber Crime.

Presentation: Professor O’Shea will discuss the known extent of child sexual assault and exploitation, including the degree to which such crimes remain hidden from the general public and law enforcement. In addition, he will discuss the role played by the world-wide-web in the increase and internationalization of child sexual exploitation and challenges this increase poses to law enforcement.

Panel 2 - Turning Child Sexual Predators’ Tools Against Them – 9:30 – 10:45AM

Detective Lieutenant James F. McLaughlin, Keene NH Police Department

Brief Biography: Det/Lt. James F. McLaughlin has been a Keene police officer since 1981 after having served as a Military Policeman (MP) in the U.S. Marine Corps. He earned an AA degree in Police Science from Mount Wachusett Community College, a BA degree in Psychology from Keene State College, a Certificate degree in Child Abuse Intervention from the University of Alabama, and a MS degree in Criminal Justice from Fitchburg State College. He is presently assigned as a Detective Lieutenant with the Investigation Bureau of the Keene Police Department. In 2003, he was one of ten police officers nationwide to receive the “Top Cop” awards presented by the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) in Washington DC. Det/Lt. McLaughlin has testified as an expert in child sexual assault and exploitation cases in New Hampshire, Colorado, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and the province of Newfoundland, Canada. He has interviewed over 2,000 victims of child abuse and has conducted over 850 investigations dealing with child sexual exploitation over the Internet of which resulted in numerous arrests.

Presentation: Det/Lt. McLaughlin will discuss his work identifying and investigating those who sexually exploit children. In particular, he will describe how he has turned many sexual predators’ favorite tool for contacting minors and disseminating images of child sexual assault and exploitation against them by going online undercover.

Panel 3 - Prosecuting Child Sexual Predators – 11:00AM – 12:15PM

Patricia LaFrance, Esq. – Hillsborough, NH County Attorney

Brief Biography: Attorney LaFrance is a career felony prosecutor, starting as an Assistant Merrimack County Attorney in 2001, and joining the Hillsborough County Attorney's Office in 2003. In 2012, she ran for the top spot and defeated the incumbent County Attorney. Throughout her career, she has prosecuted several high profile cases; including Attempted Murder, Manslaughter, Kidnapping, Burglary and Aggravated Felonious Sexual Assault and is the only current prosecutor to see one of her cases reach the United States Supreme Court. As County Attorney, she has retained and/or taken on several major cases, including the Attempted Murder of a Manchester Police Officer and the Bedford home invasion case where she is the lead prosecutor. She has also conducted numerous trainings with local police departments, Police Standards & Trainings, the New Hampshire Bar, Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), and the Child Advocacy Center (CAC), and has given numerous presentations at local colleges. She is currently the Vice-President of the Board of Directors for the Granite State Children's Alliance which oversees all the CAC's in the State. Attorney LaFrance serves as a member of the Attorney General's Commission to Combat Human Trafficking, the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee, and the Nashua Community College Criminal Justice Program Advisory Board. She is also leading a committee focused on starting a Drug Task Force in Hillsborough County.

Thomas P. Velardi, Esq. – Strafford, NH County Attorney

Brief Biography: Attorney Velardi has been a prosecuting attorney at the Strafford County Attorney's Office since 1999. He has tried a wide variety of cases including many sex assault cases involving children and adults, and cases involving the creation and dissemination of child pornography. In 2004, he was named Deputy County Attorney, and elected County Attorney in 2008. He was re-elected in 2010 and 2012. Attorney Velardi is the New Hampshire Association of Counties' affiliate president of county attorneys, a member of the statewide Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner's advisory board and conducts frequent sexual assault courtroom trainings for nurses and attorneys. As County Attorney Tom continues to prosecute many major cases himself.

Presentation: Attorneys LaFrance and Velardi will discuss the unique challenges of prosecuting child sexual predators. These include the practical difficulty of reconstructing events that, in most cases, were only witnessed by the perpetrators and their child-victims and which often occurred years in the past. These challenges also include balancing the need to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes, with minimizing the further trauma experienced by their victims who are forced tell their stories to strangers, and if the case goes to trial, in the presence of their victimizers.

Panel 4 - Surviving Child Sexual Assault & Exploitation – 12:30 – 1:45PM

Antoinette Harrington, Psy.D. - Licensed Psychologist with the Counseling Center of Nashua

Brief Biography: Antoinette Harrington received her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Antioch University New England in 2008. She is a licensed psychologist in New Hampshire and Rhode Island, and has a pending application pending for the State of Maine. Dr. Harrington practices in Nashua and specializes in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of child and adolescent trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, caused by, among other things, child sexual abuse. Following her postdoctoral training, Dr. Harrington provided supervision, consultation, and training for Dartmouth Medical School's Psychiatric Research Center, implementing research training protocols in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) to mental health providers across New Hampshire. Dr. Harrington has been a member of the Board of the Granite State Children's Alliance (CAC- Hillsborough County) and a member of American Psychological Association's Division of Trauma Psychology.

Jessica Bergeron, Child Abuse Survivor

Brief Biography: Jessica Bergeron is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse that spanned the majority of her childhood and pre-teen years. Like most victims, Jessica kept silent at the time the abuse was occurring and for years afterward. In adulthood, Jessica decided to confront her abusive past, which led to the incarceration of her uncle who is now serving 5-20 years in the NH State Prison. Jessica is the Executive Director of an Assisted Living Community in Massachusetts. She holds a Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership and a Global MBA from Southern New Hampshire University. Having a passion to advance the rights and safety of children and seniors, Jessica volunteers and has served in leadership positions and on the boards of many non-profit organizations such as Central NH Breakfast Exchange, Court Appointed Special Advocates, MERCY Worldwide, and the Massachusetts Assisted Living Facilities Association. Jessica and her husband, Luke, have been happily married for 7 years and are the proud parents of 2 boys, Lincoln (4) and Logan (2).

Presentation: Dr. Harrington will discuss working with survivors of child sexual abuse and Ms. Bergeron will discuss being a survivor of such abuse. Although such crimes have profound and lasting effects on survivors, they do not define their victims and the trauma that they inflict can be overcome.

INFORMATION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT AND EXPLOITATION

If you are a survivor of child sexual assault or exploitation, you should report it to the local law enforcement agency or prosecutor's office where the crimes took place or where you live. Below is contact information for County Attorney Offices in New Hampshire and District Attorney Offices in Massachusetts, which are generally responsible for prosecuting such crimes. In addition, such offices generally have victim assistant advocates whose job it is to work with crime victims and help them navigate the criminal justice process. Additional resources for victims, survivors and the general public is also provided below.

New Hampshire County Attorney Offices:

Belknap County Attorney's Office
64 Court St.
Laconia, NH 03246
603-527-5440

Carroll County Attorney's Office
95 Water Village Road
Ossipee, NH 03864
603-539-7769

Cheshire County Attorney's Office
12 Court St.
Keene, NH 03431
603-352-0056

Coos County Attorney's Office
55 School St.
Suite 141
Lancaster, NH 03584
603-788-5559

Grafton County Attorney's Office
3785 Dartmouth College Hwy.
North Haverhill, NH 03774
603-787-6968

Hillsborough County Attorney
Northern Office:
300 Chestnut Street
Manchester, NH 03101
603-627-5605

Hillsborough County Attorney
Southern Office:
Spring St. Courthouse
30 Spring Street
Nashua, NH 03060
603-594-3250

Merrimack County Attorney
County Attorney: Scott W. Murray
Victim / Witness Program: Karen J. Sotile, Ziva L. Summers, Sarah L. Heath, Jessica L. Clarke
If you wish to email one of the staff members, please use the following format:
E-mail: FirstInitialLastName@mcao.net; Example: John Doe would JDoe@mcao.net
Address:
4 Court St, Concord, NH 03301
Cross Streets: Between Montgomery St. and N. Main St.
(603) 228-0331

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Rockingham County Attorney’s Office

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1209
Kingston, NH 03848

Physical Address:

Rockingham County Superior Courthouse
10 RTE 125,
Brentwood, NH 03833
603-642-4249

Strafford County Attorney’s Office

259 County Farm Rd.
Dover, NH 03820
603-749-2808

Sullivan County Attorney’s Office

14 Main Street, Suite 4
Newport, NH 03773
603-863-7950

**FOR LISTINGS OF MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT ATTORNEY OFFICES BY DISTRICT
AND TOWNS/CITIES, AND THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION SEE:**

<http://www.mass.gov/mdaa/district-attorneys/>

OTHER NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE AGENCIES Other New Hampshire State Agencies:

New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Children Youth and Families
Central Intake: 1-800-894-5533
www.dhhs.state.nh.us

New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
www.nhcadv.org

The Granite State Children’s Alliance
New Hampshire’s Network of Child Advocacy Centers
www.cac-nh.org

The New Hampshire Sex Offender Registry
www.egov.nh.gov/nsor

New Hampshire Attorney General’s Office
New Hampshire Victims Compensation Program
www.doj.nh.gov

NEW HAMPSHIRE CRISIS CENTERS

Crisis Center of Central New Hampshire
Concord
1-866-841-6229 (crisis line)
603-225-7376 (office)

Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support
603-883-3044 (crisis line)
603-672-9833 (Milford office)
603-889-0858 (Nashua office)

Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention
603-352-3782 (crisis line)
1-888-511-mvcp(6287) (toll-free hotline)
603-352-3782 (Keene office)
603-532-6288 (Jaffrey office)
603-209-4015 (Peterborough office)

Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS)
Serving Rockingham and Strafford Counties of NH
Junkins Ave., Portsmouth NH 03801
603 436-4107; info@sassnh.org
24-hour toll-free crisis hotline: 888-747-7070

Community Council of Nashua 603-886-9666
Crisis line: 800-762-8191

St. Joseph's Hospital
603-882-3000

Southern NH Medical Center 603-577-2000
24 hours Crisis Team (ACCESS) 603-577-2728

FOR A LISTING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/SEXUAL ASSAULT AGENCIES AND HOTLINES IN MASSACHUSETTS SEE:

<http://www.massresources.org/domestic-violence-agencies.html>

PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING SERVICES: the American Psychological Association maintains an online “psychology help center” that allows users to access information, and find a psychologist based on areas of specialization and geographic area. To access the help center, and from there the “psychologist locator” go to: <http://apa.org/helpcenter/index.aspx>

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Attorney Eric Gentes and Dr. Rafael Rojas would like to thank the many individuals who helped them organize this conference, and in particular the individuals who have graciously given of their time and experience to participate in each of the four panels.

This conference is dedicated to all survivors.

* After graduating from Boston College Law School, **Attorney ERIC A. GENTES** spent ten years as a litigation attorney, including in private practice where he specialized in complex commercial litigation in state and federal courts and the NH Supreme Court, and as a prosecutor in Strafford County NH, where tried dozens of cases, including those involving manslaughter, sexual assault, drug and firearm charges, and domestic violence. In 2009, Attorney Gentes became the Director of the Criminal Justice Program at Rivier. Attorney Gentes’ interests include the Bill of Rights and the problem of overcriminalization as identified by the late William J. Stuntz.